



Testimony in Support of
House Bill 6406 An Act Concerning The Electronic Prescription Monitoring Program
General Law Committee
March 5, 2013

Senator Doyle, Representative Baram and members of the General Law Committee, on behalf of the 8,500 physicians and physicians in training of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS), American College of Surgeons Connecticut Chapter (ACS) and the American College of Physicians Connecticut Chapter (ACP) thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you today in support of House Bill 6406 An Act Concerning The Electronic Prescription Monitoring Program.. The proposal before you today makes critical changes to the state's Prescription Monitoring and Reporting System (PMRP).

The legislation requires nonresident pharmacies to provide the same information to the PMRP as pharmacies located within the state. Nonresident pharmacies are pharmacies located outside Connecticut that ship, mail or deliver in any manner prescription drugs into the state. With the proliferation of access points to controlled substances through electronic and non-traditional means of filling prescriptions, capturing information from these entities is critical in our joint efforts to identify and prevent the misuse of controlled substances. In addition, language allows the Commissioner to identify other products or substances for inclusion in the program.

Language has also been added to clearly state that "no person or employer shall prohibit, discourage or impede a prescribing practitioner or pharmacist from requesting controlled substance prescription information pursuant to this subsection." On the contrary, we believe prescribers should be encouraged to use the system in situations when concern over misuse of controlled substances arises. At the very least, no constraints should be placed on appropriate use by individuals registered for the PMRP.

Finally, and critical to this legislation, CSMS supports the requirement that physicians register for the program when obtaining or renewing their Connecticut license to dispense controlled substances. This would provide a system in which all physicians receive important educational information and updates about the system and its intended use.

CSMS strongly supported the establishment of the State's Prescription Monitoring and Reporting System (PMRP). Furthermore, in addition to working closely with the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) during its development and implementation, CSMS has continued to work with and communicate regularly with DCP to promote PMRP use. In addition, CSMS has had for decades a committee that develops information, education, and tools and resources for physicians associated with controlled substances and their use and abuse. However, mandating the PMRP for every prescription of a controlled substance prescribed by a physician would be administratively burdensome, cost- and time-prohibitive, and have a chilling effect on necessary and appropriate pain management.

Physicians, in particular those who provide regular care for the management and treatment of pain, are trained to identify situations in which patients may be misusing prescriptions or simply "doctor shopping." CSMS has had long standing committees that focus on patient use and abuse. Additionally, CSMS has worked with various local and national medical specialty societies, engaging in continuing medical educational (CME) sessions and programs to further educate and inform physicians about the use and misuse of controlled substances. These programs have included local and national experts, as well as federal and state officials. In addition, physicians are trained in responsible prescribing as part of established standards of care within their respective specializations.

Physicians are at the front of the line when it comes to concerns about the increasing problem of misuse of controlled substances in our society. However, in many cases the complexities of pain management and the prescription of controlled substances may cause some patients experiencing pain to suffer without treatment.

CSMS and our members offer our continued assistance to ensure the successful use of the PMRP, and to identify and reduce the misuse of controlled substance through aggressive education and information. Please support House Bill 6406 An Act Concerning The Electronic Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.